



Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

Issue 17

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Summer Travel Hints

This newsletter is published by the American Citizens Services (ACS) Unit, U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai. If there are any particular topics you are interested in, please contact ACS at: ShanghaiACS@state.gov.

Inside this issue:

Summer Travel Hints: 1

Check Your Passport's Expiration Date

Make An Early Appointment

Complete and Download Application Online

Latest H1N1 Message Update June 12 2

Leaving Consular District? 3

Avoid Delays in Receiving Refund Checks 3

As the summer travel season approaches, please check the passports of all your family members to verify that they are all still valid and do not expire any time soon!

- Check your passport's expiration date. Some countries in the region including China, the Philippines, and Indonesia require that a U.S. passport be valid for at least six months for visa issuance or visa-free entry. For information about a specific country's visa and entry requirements, the best source of information would be that country's Embassy or Consulate; however, you can also visit the U.S. State Department's website at http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html to see country specific information about your destination.

- Children's Passports. Check the expiration date of your child's passport – remember that passports for children under 16 are only valid for 5 years.

- Make an appointment early for passport services. All non-emergency

consular services require an appointment. You can make an appointment online through our website: http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/general_information_acs.html. It typically takes 10 working days from the time you apply to receive a full validity passport. There is a high level of demand for appointment slots in the days and weeks before a holiday and during the summer school holiday.

- Avoiding a long wait or don't come in at all. Avoid scheduling your appointment on Mondays or the days immediately before or after a holiday when wait times are longest. If you are just adding pages or renewing a passport that has expired within the last year, you can download your application from our website, complete it.

- Check the website. You can find the answer to many common questions, as well as useful forms and instructions, on the Consulate website at http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/general_information_acs.html.

Upcoming Holidays and Other Closures

Special points of interest:

* Federal Voting Assistance Program

Please remember that the days just before and just after a holiday are often extremely busy and you can expect significantly longer waiting times. If you visit

us outside of these times, you should have a shorter wait.

The American Citizen Services Unit will be **CLOSED** all day on the following days:

Jul. 03, 2009 Friday.

Independence Day

Please be sure to schedule appointments on-line at http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/general_information_acs.html

Latest H1N1 Message Update June 12

This warden message provides U.S. citizens with the latest information regarding human cases of 2009-H1N1 Influenza. June 11, 2009, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) categorized the level of influenza pandemic alert at phase 6. It is important to understand that this change is based on the geographic spread of the virus to other parts of the world and does not necessarily reflect any change in the severity of the virus or associated illness. Phase 6 is characterized by community level human-to-human spread of the virus in at least another region outside of North America. At this time, WHO considers the overall severity of the influenza pandemic to be **moderate**.

The moderate assessment reflects that:

- Most people recover from infection without the need for hospitalization or medical care.
- Overall, national levels of severe illness from influenza A(H1N1) appear similar to levels seen during local seasonal influenza periods, although high levels of disease have occurred in some local areas and institutions.

As of COB June 11, China's Ministry of Health (MOH) has officially communicated information about 126 confirmed cases of infection by the novel 2009 influenza A/H1N1. Confirmed cases have been detected in ten provinces and the municipalities of Beijing and Shanghai, with the greatest number of cases occurring in Guangdong Province, Fujian Province, Sichuan Province, Beijing, and Shanghai. Of the 126 confirmed cases, MOH reported on June 8 that 50 infected patients had recovered and been released from treatment. The remaining cases are being treated in isolation at local designated hospitals. To date, all of the current cases are recovering without severe complications.

For the most up-to-date information on affected countries, please refer to: <http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/>, and <http://www.who.int>. Currently, the illnesses and symptoms caused by the novel H1N1 virus have been similar to that of seasonal influenza. Thus, we continue to encourage all individuals to take responsibility for their own health by following these steps to prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- If you become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, you should call your health care provider, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed.
- If you get sick with influenza, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school for seven days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom free for at least 24 hours and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Maintain healthy eating habits. The Novel H1N1 virus is not spread by food.

The Embassy reminds U.S. citizens that most cases of influenza are not 2009-H1N1 Influenza. Any questions or concerns about influenza or other illnesses should be directed to a medical professional. Although the Embassy cannot provide medical advice or provide medical services to the public, listings of hospitals and doctors for the five consular districts can be found at the following websites:

Beijing: http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/acs_health.html

Shanghai: http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/medical_facilities.html

Guangzhou: http://guangzhou.usembassy-china.org.cn/medical_providers_in_south_china.htm

Chengdu: http://chengdu.usembassy-china.org.cn/health/_local_doctors.html

Shenyang: <http://shenyang.usembassy-china.org.cn/medical2.html>

For further information about 2009-H1N1 Influenza, including steps you can take to stay healthy, please consult the Department of State information at

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_pandemic.html, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>, the U.S. Government pandemic influenza website at <http://www.pandemicflu.gov>, and the World Health Organization website at <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>. For additional travel safety information, please consult the State Department's website at <http://www.travel.state.gov>.

U.S. citizens may also call the Office of Overseas Citizens Services in the United States for the latest travel information. The Office of Overseas Citizens Services can be reached from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, Monday through Friday, by calling 1-888-407-4747 from within the U.S. and Canada, or by calling (202) 501-4444 from other countries.

Americans living or traveling in China are encouraged to register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate through the State Department's travel registration website, <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

so that they can obtain updated information on travel and security within China. Americans without Internet access may register directly with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. By registering, American citizens make it easier for the Embassy or Consulate to contact them in case of emergency.

The U.S. Embassy can be reached 24 hours per day at 86-10-8531-3000. The addresses and telephone contact information for the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in China are at the bottom of this announcement.

For the latest security information, Americans living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs website at <http://www.travel.state.gov>, where the current Worldwide Caution, Travel Alerts, Travel Warnings, and health-information resources can be found.



Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

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Floor

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Fax: (86-21) 6217-2071

After Hours
Emergencies:

(86-21) 6433-3936

Open 8:00am - 11:30am
and 1:30pm - 3:30pm
Monday to Friday.

*Closed on Tuesday
afternoons, weekends
and holidays.

[http://shanghai.usemba
ssy-china.org.cn/](http://shanghai.usemba
ssy-china.org.cn/)

Avoid Delays in Receiving Refund Checks

U.S. citizen taxpayers in the Shanghai Consular District are reminded that they can often avoid unnecessary delays in receiving their tax refund checks from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) <http://www.irs.gov/>. Taxpayers who have a checking, savings or IRA account with a bank or other financial institution in the U.S. are encouraged to fill in boxes 73(a)(b)(c) of Form 1040 with routing and account number information. This allows the IRS to electronically transfer any refund due to you directly into your account, a process that is much faster, safer and more convenient than the alternative. Non-electronic refunds must first be printed on checks, and then mailed to the Consulate in Shanghai where they must be re-addressed by hand and sent via registered mail to the taxpayer's home address – a process that can add many months to the waiting time for a refund. (Additional information can be found in Form 1040 Instruction booklets available at IRS website: <http://www.irs.gov/>.)

Federal Voting Assistance Program

The FVAP provides U.S. citizens worldwide a broad range of non-partisan information and assistance to facilitate their participation in the democratic process - regardless of where they work or live. The FVAP also administers

the Federal responsibilities of the [National Voter Registration Act \(NVRA\)](#), which designates armed forces recruiting offices nationwide as voter registration agencies allowing eligible U.S. citizens to apply for voter registration, or apply

to change voter registration data.

For more information about the Federal Voting Assistance Program, please visit <http://www.fvap.gov/>.

Leaving Shanghai Consular District?

If you are departing from Shanghai consular district after a long stay here, and you formally registered your stay with the U.S. consulate, please be sure to "cancel" your registration when you leave.

You can deregister yourself by visiting the

travelregistration.state.gov site if you were previously registered through this site.

If you previously submitted your registration at the U.S. consulate, you may deregister yourself by sending an email request to ShanghaiACS@state.gov.